

**THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL HISTORY  
OF TOBACCO PRODUCTION  
IN SOUTH CAROLINA**



December 1992

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## PREFACE

The goal of this publication is to help teachers and students participate in a unique program integrating South Carolina's cultural heritage, the history of South Carolina's Pee Dee region, and the history of tobacco. It also incorporates a broad array of other learning areas, including math and science.

An integrated curricula, while relatively new to many programs, is very simple. It recognizes that our current method of teaching isolates both the student and teacher from the broad pattern of interdisciplinary understanding. Integrated curricula allow the student to better understand how diverse concepts come together to promote a fuller understanding of the world and essential concepts.

By integrating cultural heritage with components of math and science, this program provides a more exciting, and more worldly, view of South Carolina. It promotes a greater interest in both history and other disciplines. It also allows students and teachers to better understand the dynamic relationship between history, agricultural endeavors, and economic factors. It encourages students to understand, not simply to memorize and parrot. This integrated curricula is developed to increase critical thinking and maximize the participation of the student in the learning process. Coupled with the hands-on experiences of the "Tobacco Heritage Travel Box" and the excitement of the tobacco videos, the program will maximize the ability of the student to learn from doing.

This booklet is organized to allow teachers to quickly identify the information essential for curriculum development -- maximizing the educational potential of the program. Included is information on the goals and objectives of this program, additional background information to provide teachers with the cultural heritage and history content necessary to teach the lessons, three individual teacher lesson plans, student worksheets, and extension activities.

While designed for use primarily in Grade 8, to correlate with the instruction of South Carolina History, these materials have wide applicability. With relatively little modification they can be used in Grades 3-12.

***Finally, this program offers no social, moral, or medical judgement on tobacco or the current industry. While such judgements are certainly within the realm of historians, this program is solely intended to examine the place of tobacco in South Carolina's history -- especially the history of the Pee Dee region. We expect that teachers, parents, and students will develop a dialogue to explore the social, moral, and medical consequences of tobacco production. Regardless of individual feelings, tobacco has historically been a significant crop and it has affected the development of the Pee Dee region, perhaps more than any other single historical event. It is this historical significance which is addressed by this program.***

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## INTRODUCTION

These units focus on several major themes in the history tobacco cultivation in South Carolina, as well as the Pee Dee region:

- Native American use of tobacco,
- colonial and antebellum cultivation of tobacco,
- early techniques of tobacco cultivation, and
- the development of the bright leaf tobacco industry in the Pee Dee after the Civil War.

Because tobacco cultivation spans virtually all of South Carolina's nearly 325 years, it offers students the opportunity to understand how one economic activity, while shaping the destiny of the state, also changed in response to both external and internal conditions. Teaching the history of tobacco not only helps students in the Pee Dee better understand their personal heritage, but it will help students understand the complexity of history. As you read through this material, you will notice that there are relatively few dates and very few names. We have chosen to emphasize the broad themes and patterns of history, rather than the individual players or actions.

### **Organization**

The lesson plans are preceded by a section which provides the background information that teachers will need for the various classes, as well as additional information which can be used either by the teacher or the students. Each lesson plan is presented in a fairly standard approach utilizing the BSAP (Basic Skills Assessment Program) model familiar to most teachers in South Carolina.

Each lesson plan is organized in a two page format read horizontally. At the top of the page is the lesson title. The "Getting Started" section is read vertically and contains the pre-planning information necessary before the lesson is taught. It includes the time needed for each lesson, although this can obviously be varied as necessary and desired. Also included are the materials necessary to teach the lesson. Following the lesson plan are typically a variety of worksheets suitable for a wide range of grade levels and needs.

The "Lesson Objectives" are presented in the next section and are correlated with the "Instructional Approach." The Instructional Approach contains three important components: exploration, development, and application. This approach has also been borrowed from *BSAP Science: Teaching Through Inquiry* and its goal is to encourage hands-on inquiry, helping students to learn through doing. This is a uniquely effective approach applicable not only to science, but also to history and social studies.

The "Lesson Procedures" provide a detailed, step-by-step approach for teachers to follow in the implementation of the various lesson plans. Obviously this organization can be modified by teachers to incorporate additional information, or to fit shorter class periods. Finally, the "Full

Circle Questions" are designed for the student's use and are intended to complete the learning inquiry process. These questions may form the basis for additional class discussion, student notebooks, or essay questions.

### **Teaching Tobacco Heritage**

Those involved in the preparation of this curricula are acutely aware of the controversies which surround the tobacco industry and the use of this product. History consists of many potentially controversial subjects -- destruction of native populations, colonialism, African American slavery, ethnic and religious disputes, and Jim Crow laws, to name but a few. As previously mentioned, this curricula offers no judgement on the health risks associated with the use of tobacco, or the social or moral implications of its use. Nor is this curricula intended to promote or encourage the use of tobacco. We feel that these issues are appropriately covered in health courses currently implemented by school districts.

This curricula simply offers teachers the opportunity to teach the place of tobacco in the economic, social, and political history of South Carolina more effectively. Tobacco is, and historically has been, an extremely important crop to our State -- good, bad, or indifferent. Students should have the opportunity to understand the place of tobacco, just as they understand the importance of rice and cotton.

When we teach history we often teach names, dates, places, and events -- certainly all important. Yet, too often we fail to appreciate the ordinary. We fail to understand the magnitude of even the simple events. And we often take for granted the significance of our agrarian history -- the sights, sounds, and smell of plantations and farms. Somehow we tend to teach the history of famous people, divorced from their physical environment. That is certainly the case with tobacco, since in spite of its economic and social significance to South Carolina it has been relegated to a place of bare mention in common history textbooks. Yet tobacco, like its more famous relatives cotton and rice:

served as the measure of the man. Both aspects of the tobacco mentality -- tobacco as shaper of everyday experience and tobacco as source of individual and corporate meaning -- help to explain the intensity of the planters' commitment to the staple and to the personal relations that it spawned (Breen 1985:23).

Tobacco, throughout its history in South Carolina, affected its planters' by determining where they might live and farm, how they would spend their time, and how many slaves (or tenants) they would have on their plantations (or farms).

To understand what South Carolina is, one must understand what South Carolina has been over the past several hundred years. And that requires more than the conventional discussions of rice, cotton, and perhaps indigo. South Carolina, and especially the Pee Dee region, was shaped by the presence of tobacco. We hope that this curricula will help instill a clearer understanding of that heritage.

We welcome the input, thoughts, and experiences of teachers using this curricula, since our goal is to provide materials useful to and useable by South Carolina's public school teachers.

## NATIVE AMERICAN USE OF TOBACCO AND ITS CULTIVATION IN CAROLINA

Our word "tobacco" comes from the Spanish *tobaco*, which seems to have been directly derived from the Arawak term for "cigar." Columbus found Carib Indians rolling tobacco into cigars and also burning it in a fire and inhaling the smoke through reeds stuck into their nostrils. Indians in Cuba or Hispaniola were also observed smoking cigars. They claimed that it comforted the limbs, made them sleepy, and lessened their weariness. The Cherokee believed that tobacco could be used as a diuretic, an emetic, an antispasmodic, and an expectorant. It was used for dropsy, cramps, lock-jaw, colic, dizziness and fainting, snake bite, ague, and even insect bites.

The religious use of tobacco among Native American groups was perhaps as important as its secular use. Shamans used tobacco to establish rapport with the spirits, to drive away disease, and during important public ceremonies. In addition to smoking tobacco, it was also burned, used as incense, or was cast into the air as a powder. Medicine bundles, which have tremendous religious and ritual significance to Native Americans, often contain tobacco.

There are over a dozen species or varieties of tobacco identified by botanists, most of them native to the "New World." At least two cultigens -- plants that have been modified by humans through selection or hybridization and which are cultivated in areas where wild ancestors are absent -- are found in North America. One is the sweet-scented species of *Nicotiana tabacum* Linn., the other a coarser variety called *N. rustica* Linn..

*N. tabacum* probably originated from the hybridization of two wild South American species (*N. sylvestris* and *N. tomentosiformis*). It spread from South America into the West Indies, where it was discovered by Columbus' crew. It did not, however, enter the Southeast until Europeans began its cultivation.

*N. rustica* is also of South American origin, but it spread much further, paralleling the distribution of corn. *N. rustica* was cultivated by a number of Southeastern groups and was known to the early colonists as Oronoke. Its flavor was so harsh that the Native Americans often mixed it with other plants -- often sumac leaves or the inner bark of the dogwood tree.

Tobacco was introduced to Spain in 1519 and its use had spread throughout Europe by 1600. Oronoke was cultivated by the first settlers of Jamestown, later being replaced by the milder *N. tabacum*, which commanded a higher market price. By the eighteenth century one authority reported that tobacco:

was planted in large quantities by the Indians, when we first came to America, and its use from them brought into Europe; but what their method of culture was is now no longer known, as they plant none, but buy what they want of the English.

Europe's acceptance of tobacco was nearly universal. It was smoked, chewed, and used as snuff. Its use spread into the Middle East from Europe. However, in 1603 King James I issued a pamphlet entitled, "A Counterblaste to Tobacco," which attributed many harmful effects to smoking. In an (unsuccessful) effort to stamp out its use, he placed a heavy duty on its importation.



### **Early Tobacco Cultivation in Carolina, 1670-1690**

From the very earliest days of the Carolina settlement, efforts were made to identify that profitable crop which would reap great rewards for the Lord's Proprietors. In 1671 Landgrave John Locke reported to the Proprietors:

Wee are in great hopes of Ginger Indigo Tobacco & Cotton to be our maine Commodities, they all come up very well.

And for a brief period, it seemed that tobacco might, in fact, become a major South Carolina crop. Barbadian planters immigrating to the new colony successfully introduced tobacco, receiving tremendous interest from the Proprietors. In fact, Carolina tobacco was early accepted as a medium of exchange in trade with Barbados. By 1675 it was acceptable payment for all debts owed to the Proprietors.

In an effort to further strengthen the tobacco crop the Proprietors sent "emissaries" to Virginia to gather information on the planting and curing techniques used there. The Proprietors used incentives to encourage the production of tobacco, providing a seven year period free of export duties. They also provided tobacco planters free passage to Carolina, allowing the new settlers to pay the obligation of "the sume of five hundred pounds Marchantable tobacco cotton or ginger" over a two year period.

Although tobacco had become more economically important through time, it had also become more obvious that Carolina tobacco could not compete with that produced in Virginia and Maryland. This was not so much that the tobacco produced in the middle states was finer, but had more to do with those states controlling all of the major European markets. Carolina tobacco did continue, however, to be exported to the West Indies.

### **Clay Pipes and Other Tobacco Artifacts**

The Native American habit of smoking tobacco in a device formed "like a little ladell" was adopted by the English in the sixteenth century. By the early seventeenth century the white ball or kaolin clay pipe had become common. The earliest types were short-stemmed, some being 2 inches or less in length, although toward the end of the seventeenth century the stem had lengthened to 11 or 12 inches. These pipes were very inexpensive (selling in 1709 for as little as two shillings a gross).

It is often thought that as smokers passed the pipe from mouth to mouth in taverns, each smoker broke off a small portion of the stem -- thus accounting for the initially long stems. This, however, was not the case. The long stems probably helped the hot gases cool and made the unfiltered smoke more palatable. The long stems, however, were fragile and did frequently break.

A nineteenth century account describes the making of these pipes:

Tobacco Pipes are made from clay. The more common kind are made from the clay which bears the name pipe-clay, most of which comes from Dorsetshire, and after being purified and softened is used by the pipemaker, who kneads it roughly into the required shapes, partially dries it and then bores the holes through the stems with a kind of long iron needle or wire, previously oiled, afterwards bending the bulbs into their position and finishing by a process of moulding.

When removed from the moulds and dried, they are polished with an instrument

made of some hard smooth wood or bone. They are then baked in a kiln, the heat of which is gradually increased (Atkinson n.d.:32).

Curiously, just as tobacco prices fluctuated, so too did the popularity of pipes. Between 1670 and 1740 the popularity of snuff taking, brought to England from France by the followers of Charles II on his return from exile, caused a severe recession in the pipe-making trade. The French courtiers considered it to be more elegant to sniff powdered tobacco than to smoke it.

Regardless, pipe-making spread throughout England and into Scotland. By the nineteenth century there were a number of pipe-making establishments in the United States, although most were in the Northeast.

In addition to tobacco pipes, smokers also used thongs to remove embers from the fire to light pipes. There were even special pottery braziers made to hold embers on tables for pipe smokers. Next to the means of lighting the pipe, the most important smoker's tool was the tamper or stopper. Commonly made of brass, usually with very ornamental handles, these were meant to tamp the tobacco down into the pipe, allowing a better burn. A small "corkscrew" type item was used to remove the plugged tobacco from the pipe bowl. Finally, a variety of tobacco boxes were made, both for the individual to carry around and also to use at home.

# Native Americans & Tobacco

Getting Started	Lesson Objectives	Instructional Approach
<b>Time Needed</b>  -Minimum of two 45-55 minute class periods (teacher may choose to expand time spent in class )	A. The student will be introduced to the reasons and methods Native Americans used tobacco.  B. The student will be exposed to the variety of Native American plants commonly used today, including tobacco.	<b>Exploration</b> Whole Class (handling objects & discussion)
<b>Lesson Materials</b>  Provided in Travel Box: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tobacco leaves, seeds, magnifying glass, mounted photographs/drawings.</li> <li>• Tobacco seed for growing.</li> </ul> • Tobacco Education curriculum, including lesson plans and activity sheets for teachers to use in classroom.  Provided by school/students: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Variety of seeds of Native American plants.</li> <li>• Pots/cups of soil.</li> <li>• Masking tape to label pots/cups.</li> </ul>		
	C. The students will understand how the heritage and history of South Carolina has been affected by the cultivation of Native American plants.  D. The student will understand how important tobacco has been as a South Carolina crop.	<b>Development</b> Whole Class (discussion)
	E. The student will explore the differences in growing methods in a variety of Native American plants.	<b>Application</b> Whole Class (discussion &/or project)

## "Full Circle" Questions

(Questions which help relate the past to the lives of students today)

1. Are there any farms in your community? Do they grow Native American plants?
2. Do stores in your community sell Native American plants or their products?

# Native Americans & Tobacco

## Lesson Procedures

1. The teacher will explain to the students that Native Americans did not use tobacco for recreational reasons. Some Native Americans used tobacco for medicinal purposes. Other Native American groups used tobacco in religious ceremonies and rituals. Although they usually smoked the tobacco, they also chewed it, used it as incense, and made a drink from it.
2. The teacher will explain that there are several other important plants which are Native American, such as: corn, lima beans, potatoes, sweet potatoes, tomatoes, vanilla, pumpkin, squash, and cotton.
3. The teacher will allow students to handle and examine tobacco leaves and seeds. The students may also examine maps that illustrate the spread of Native American plants prior to European exploration.
4. Encourage students to discuss how Native American plants have influenced the crops we grow and use in South Carolina today.
5. Encourage students to discuss how growing tobacco has affected the agriculture of South Carolina.
6. The teacher will assign students to research the growing methods and needs of different Native American plants. (See Native American Agriculture Project Sheet).

## "Full Circle" Questions (continued)

3. What plants might be used to replace the Native American plants grown or sold in your community?
4. Does your family use Native American plants?

## NATIVE AMERICAN AGRICULTURE PROJECT

### OBJECTIVE:

To plant several familiar Native American plants and observe and understand their different soil, water, space, and attention requirements. This should stimulate discussion as to the importance of a crop as opposed to the difficulty of its cultivation.

### Supplies:

- Tobacco seed for planting is provided in the Travel Box.
- Students should bring from home other seeds that may be found in their kitchen (tomato/squash/pumpkin seeds, potato eyes, etc.).
- School/students need to provide pots or cups filled with soil to plant the seeds in.
- Masking tape should be used for labeling pots/cups.

### Getting Started:

- Students may work as individuals, teams, or as a class (to be decided by teacher).
- Have the students germinate and care for a variety of Native American plants.
- Using the attached worksheet, have the students describe the growth and needs of the plants. Use one worksheet per plant.
- Assign students to research additional requirements of the plants.
- At the end of the project (to be decided by the teacher), assign the students to write a report, answering the following questions:
  1. Which plant was easiest to grow? Why?
  2. Which plant was the most difficult to grow? Why?
  3. Which is the smallest plant? Largest?
  4. If any plants were too difficult to raise, what plants could the Native Americans have used to replace them?
  5. Could Native American children have helped to grow these plants?

# PLANT GROWTH DATA SHEET

Student Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Plant Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Planted: \_\_\_\_\_

[illegible]

Growth Information should include: germination date, growth measurements, soil/water/space/fertilizer requirements.

# NATIVE AMERICAN AGRICULTURE

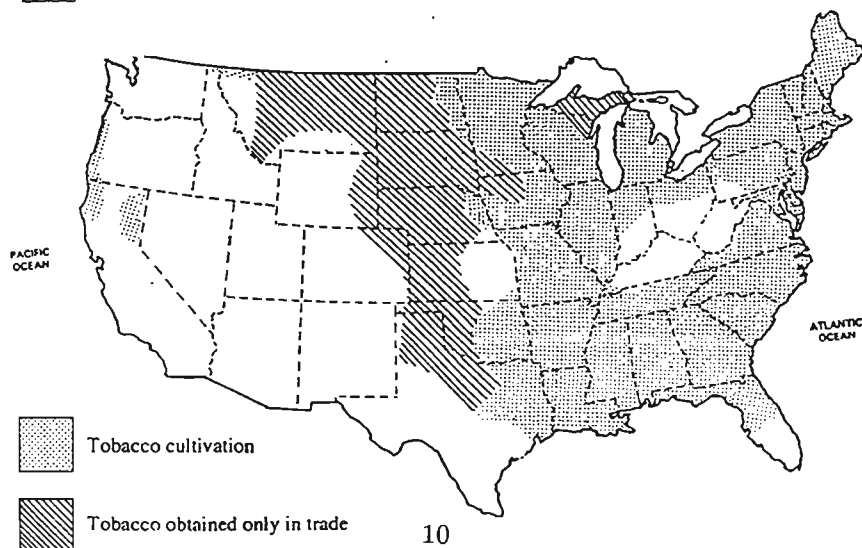
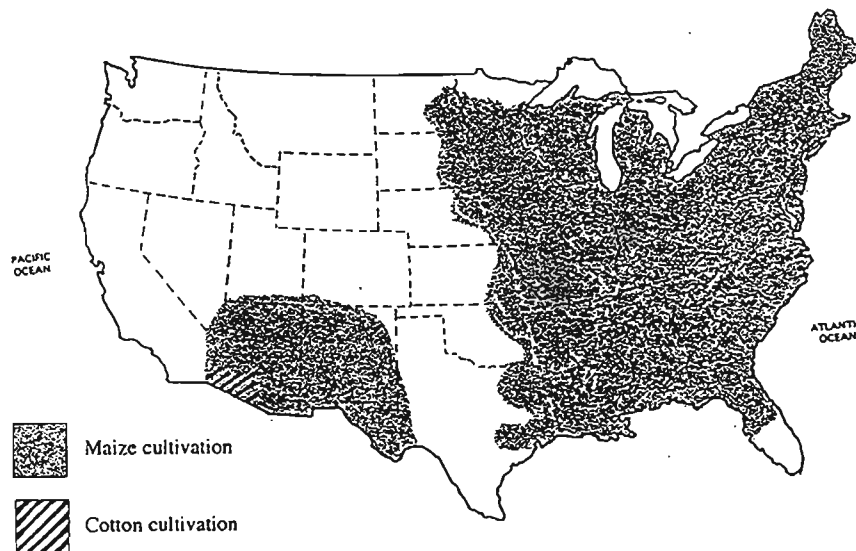
Study the maps. Then decide whether each statement is true or false.

If the statement is true, write T next to it. If it is false, write F.

Correct the facts in the false sentences.

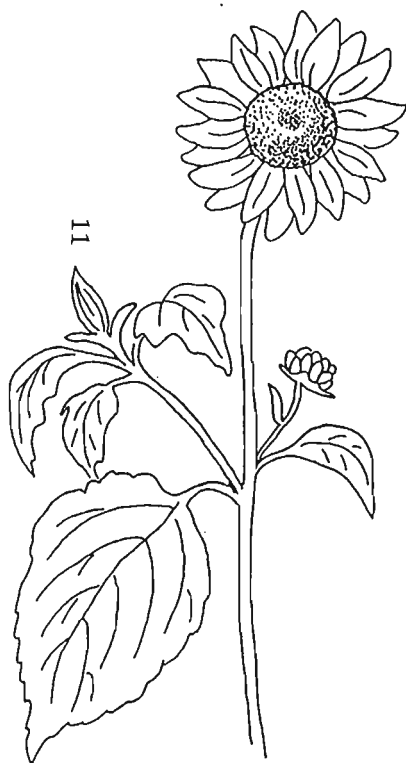
1. Tobacco was grown in the South Carolina area.
2. Cotton was grown in the South Carolina area.
3. Maize was not grown in the South Carolina area.
4. Cotton was grown as far north as Vermont.
5. Tobacco was grown as far west as Texas.
6. Maize only grows in tropical areas.

State two more facts you have learned from the maps:



# NATIVE AMERICAN PLANTS WORD PUZZLE

Listed below are the names of 14 plants grown by the Native Americans. The names are hidden in this puzzle, spelled from left to right, top to bottom, and diagonally. Circle the words as you find them.



AVOCADO  
CORN  
COTTON  
LIMABEAN  
MARIGOLD

PINEAPPLE  
POTATO  
PUMPKIN  
SQUASH  
SUNFLOWER

SWEETPOTATO  
TOBACCO  
TOMATO  
VANILLA



## TOBACCO MOVES INTO THE PIEDMONT, 1760-1821

Tobacco continued to be a minor agricultural commodity after 1690, although it was generally cultivated for household or local consumption. In 1740/1 Robert Pringle, a Charleston factor wrote an English investor who desired to purchase a large quantity of Carolina tobacco:

As to what you write in Relation to Tobacco it Cannot be Done here & it will be wholly Impracticable to procure the quantity you mention at any Rate, this not being a Tobaccoa Country & have not seen nor heard of so much of that Commodity as you Carried with you ever since you have been here. Therefore would not have you entertain any further thoughts of such a Scheme, for Do assure you it wont Answer & Cant be Done in this place. As to Rice, Pitch, Tar, Turpentine, & Deer Skins, you may be always Supplied with them (Edgar 1972:272).

In 1755, colonial merchant Henry Laurens was unable to sell a large quantity of tobacco from a London exporter, remarking: "Our Planters are great smoakers but they raise their own Tobacco." Even the African American slaves are known to have grown tobacco in small plots, selling it to local markets for spending money.

While there are no systematic records of agricultural output, it is clear from historic documents that Carolina planters were intent on making rice the single cash product of South Carolina during the first half of the eighteenth century. Just prior to the American Revolution, however, there was a surge in tobacco production and export. Annual shipments of tobacco increased from 160,000 pounds in 1769 to over 0.5 million pounds in 1773. By 1770 Governor Bull even placed tobacco in his list of the most important South Carolina crops.

The American Revolution interrupted tobacco planting and exportation, but it was quick to recover. Only a year after the end of the war, export of tobacco nearly quadrupled to 2,680 hogsheads (a hogshead of tobacco, with the leaves packed whole, may have ranged from 950 to 1600 pounds).

In spite of the early profitability of tobacco, the up country farmers found it difficult for their tobacco to reach markets. The Fall Line shoals made water transportation difficult and overland transport was slow (typically the wagons averaged about 24 miles a day). One unusual technique was to roll the hogshead of tobacco behind a mule or horse! The *South Carolina Gazette* in December 1771 reported "no less than 113 Wagons the Road to Town, most of them loaded with two Hogsheads of Tobacco."

Coupled with the problems presented by the unreliable transportation network, was the need for all tobacco to be graded and inspected -- a practice which was only done in Charleston. This inspection and grading was intended to ensure buyers that South Carolina tobacco was as good as that produced in Virginia and Maryland, allowing the State to more successfully compete on the open market.

As early as 1768 the up country farmers petitioned the legislature to establish inspection and storage facilities in Piedmont locations to reduce the travel distance. By 1771 10 inspection

stations were established. By 1789 there were an additional 34 stations and in 1799 there were 54 operating throughout the state. Most were built on the banks of rivers or streams to make it easier to move the hogsheads from boats to warehouses. Most were simple affairs -- probably a log or frame structure which served to store the graded tobacco. Traveling inspectors were required to provide their own scales to weigh the hogsheads.

While grading the tobacco helped South Carolina compete with states like Virginia and Maryland, there was always the problem of fluctuating prices. Most were farmers of limited means, making them particularly vulnerable to market conditions. As the Duke de la Rouchefoucault Liancourt observed in 1796, "the most opulent planters only reside in the lower country; people of less property, or of no property at all, live in the upper country."

By the first quarter of the nineteenth century tobacco was ensconced in the Piedmont, as well as in several counties below the Fall Line, like Orangeburg and Barnwell. The up country counties included Abbeville, Chester, Chesterfield, Edgefield, Fairfield, Greenville, Kershaw, Lancaster, Laurens, Lexington, Newberry, Pendleton, Richland, Spartanburg, Union, and York.

With tobacco came social and population changes. Before the American Revolution, nearly two-thirds of South Carolina's white population lived in the Piedmont and the area contained less than 10% of the African American slaves held by South Carolinians. After the Revolution, and corresponding with the rise of cotton, this ratio began to change. By 1800 over a quarter of the Piedmont households were slave owners and by 1820 this had increased to nearly 40%.

The perfection of the cotton gin transformed South Carolina. Using early hand gins slaves might have expected to clean about five pounds of cotton each week. Using Whitney's earliest roller gin (introduced in 1793) allowed upwards of 50 pounds a day to be cleaned. Cotton was no longer a crop produced primarily for domestic use -- it became a competitor in the world market. More and more farmers turned away from tobacco and toward cotton. Gradually cotton became king at the expense of tobacco. In 1800 Governor John Drayton remarked that tobacco had "become in less demand." The state operated tobacco inspection and storage facilities, by the mid-1820s, were being used for the storage of cotton. By 1824 every county in South Carolina produced cotton. And between 1820 and 1860 cotton production outstripped tobacco, as well as all other cash crops such as indigo, rice, and sugar. Tobacco production fell from a high of 13 million pounds in 1799 to a low of 490,000 pounds in 1860.

### **The Cultivation of Early Tobacco**

*Nicotiana tabacum* is a stout annual or short-lived perennial which can grow up to seven feet in height. It is a member of the nightshade family (Solanaceae) which also includes the Irish potato and tomato. It is propagated from a very small seed, which can retain its viability for up to 20 years.

There are several publications (many oriented more toward Virginia than South Carolina) which detailed the "correct" method of planting, cultivating, harvesting, and curing tobacco. One of the earliest is *A Treatise on the Culture of the Tobacco Plant* by Jonathan Carver, printed in London in 1779, although even earlier the book, *American Husbandry*, helped readers in a wide variety of agricultural pursuits, including tobacco. For example, it mentioned that "a very considerable tract of land is necessary for a tobacco plantation" -- at least 50 acres for each slave - - and without this much land the planters "will find themselves distressed for want of room." More importantly, tobacco was not like wheat or corn, which was planted and taken for granted. Tobacco required constant attention, with many of the precise activities left up to the judgement

of the master planter.

Early planting and curing methods in South Carolina are not well documented and John Drayton's description in 1802 may be the first to provide something approaching a comprehensive account of the planting and air-drying methods:

In March, a small bed is sown with the seeds; which in a week, or two, shoots up young plants. When these are of sufficient strength for transplantation, holes are dug in a suitable field of rich high land, (previously prepared by the plough and harrow for that purpose) at the distance of three feet asunder; and the plant is therein carefully inserted. Hoeing and weeding them from grass, is absolutely necessary; as scarcely any plant requires stronger soils, or sooner impoverishes them. As the tobacco encreases in strength, the earth is drawn up to its roots; and it is carefully picked of worms and catapillars, which are peculiarly destructive to it. During their growth they are occasionally topped, to make the leaves longer and thicker; this however; promotes suckers, which must be pulled off: and hence topping should be used with prudence, and rather late in season. When the tobacco is ripe, it is cut close to the ground, and thence is carried to the curing house; which generally made of logs, is well ventilated. The stalks, with the leaves adhering to them, are here hung up in pairs, on poles placed parallel to each other, along the building; leaving a space between them, that the plants may not touch each other. They thus remain, to sweat and dry in the shade; and when sufficiently so, the leaves are stripped from the stalks; and are classed according to their respective goodness. They are then tied in small bundles, with one of the leaves, and remain thus in small heaps, until perfectly aired. After which, they are pressed into hogsheads, made of oak, containing from 1200 to 1600 lbs. weight; and being duly inspected at the different tobacco inspection houses appointed for that purpose, throughout the state, the tobacco is then ready for exportation to foreign markets (Drayton 1802:136).

In Virginia tobacco was planted even earlier -- usually in late December or early January! But like South Carolina the Virginia accounts also stressed the need for rich land, with the planters often using wood ash or manure on the fields. Once the seed was sowed in beds, they were covered with branches to protect the tobacco from frost damage. Planters also were careful to sow many more seeds than they expected to need plants, since the process of transplanting was so hazardous to the young seedlings. The seedlings were often transplanted in April, although the planters used a wide variety of lore to judge the right moment -- the leaves were supposed to be "as large as a dollar," or were supposed to be a particular thickness -- all subtle indicators learned through personal experience as a master planter. Beyond all of the signs, the planter also had to wait for soaking rains to loosen the soil and allow the seedlings to be pulled up without damaging their roots. Slaves found this work difficult and very unpleasant; as one observer wrote, "when a good shower . . . happens at this period of the year the planter [or more likely his slaves] hurries to the plant bed, disregarding the teeming element, which is doomed to wet his skin."

The slave children carried the seedlings into the fields, dropping them on the hills to be planted by the more experienced adult slaves. Under good conditions the young plants would all be planted by early May, although there was no rest. Throughout the growing season the plants had to be weeded and the plants eventually were topped. This topping, also mentioned by Drayton, served to stop the plant from spending energy growing tall, stopped the production of leaves, prevented flowering, and caused an enlargement of the existing leaves. The topping also resulted in the accumulation of chemicals (such as nicotine) in the leaves. But the topping also produced suckers, which had to be removed, lest they rob the developing leaves of nutrients.

The next step, cutting the tobacco, caused as much tension as planting the seedlings. While the cutting typically took place sometime in September, the exact time was never certain. Waiting too long would expose the crop to an early frost -- destroying the unprotected plants. But cutting too early, while the leaves were still "heavy" with moisture, would cause poor curing and rot. Again, the planters relied on "folk" wisdom -- the leaves having the "right" appearance. One planter remarked only that "experience alone can enable a person to judge when tobacco is fully ripe." This cutting, however, was never referred to as a "harvest," since the leaf still had to be cured -- an equally arduous task that was also "an art" since the leaf had to be neither too dry nor too moist.

The curing was terminated when the leaves became dry without being brittle and pliable without being moist -- a time that was often described as being called "case." When the leaves reached "case," the slaves were directed to strip the leaves from the stalks. If even higher returns were sought, specially adapt slaves "stemmed" the leaves -- removing the large stem or fiber from the web of the leaf. Afterwards, the tobacco was "prized." Slaves would place layer upon layer of leaves in hogsheads (large barrels often manufactured by plantation coopers). Using a hand press the slaves "prized" the tobacco until it was compressed into a nearly solid mass. The reason the tobacco was "prized" is simple -- freight rates were determined by the individual hogsheads rather than by the total weight!

This final process often continued, when there was a good crop, through Christmas. And the prized tobacco was often not shipped to the European market until spring -- a full fifteen months after the sowing of the tobacco seed. This delay from sowing to marketing helps explain why profits on tobacco were so uncertain. It is also likely one reason that Piedmont planters never invested heavily in tobacco cultivation, although as early as 1768 one Charlestonian remarked that, "several large quantities of excellent tobacco, made in the back settlements, have been brought to this market."

While there were large tobacco farms, most in South Carolina were small and in the up country the primary labor would have been the farmer, his family, and one or two slaves. About 3 acres of tobacco would have produced about 2400 pounds of salable tobacco annually. Based on price levels after 1720, such a planter would have earned £10 to £20 (\$650-\$1300) for the crop. One historian has estimated that tobacco sales generated anywhere from 10 to 25% of a family's overall net income.

### **The Marketing of Early Tobacco**

Early in South Carolina's history tobacco was marketed almost exclusively under the consignment system. The grower retained ownership and assumed all the risks of planting, curing, and shipment. The planter also payed all of the costs, including those associated with shipment to the English market. An English tobacco merchant negotiated the sale and charged a commission for his services, often 2½% of the gross sales price plus import duties -- this often amounted to almost 10% of the planter's net proceeds.

The planter would typically send along a list of desired goods and the tobacco merchant would be instructed to fill that list using the proceeds from the sale. The English tobacco merchant obtained a handsome mark-up on these items, adding to profit he made on the tobacco planter.

The merchants also offered "advances" on the expected proceeds of the tobacco, allowing the planter to make purchases prior to the crop being cured. While this made life easier, it also made it more risky, since any down-turn in the price, or damage to the crop, would leave the

planter in debt.

### European Attitudes Concerning Tobacco

In spite of early efforts to halt the use of tobacco, the English (and other Europeans) continued to use vast quantities of tobacco during the nineteenth century. One account is that offered by *Culpeper's Complete Herbal & English Physician*, published in 1826. Written by Nicholas Culpeper and Peter Cole it offered extensive advice on how to preserve one's health and cure common ailments. On tobacco, the volume remarked:

A slight infusion of the fresh gathered leaves vomits, and that very roughly; but for constitutions that can bear it, it is a good medicine for rheumatic pains; an ointment made of them, with hog's lard, is good for the piles when they get painful and are inflamed. The distilled oil is sometimes dropped on cotton, and applied to aching teeth, and it seldom fails to give a temporary relief. The powdered leaves, or decoction of them, kill lice, and other vermin. The smoke of tobacco injected, in the manner of a clyster, is of singular efficacy in obstinate stoppages of the bowels, for destroying those small worms called ascarides, and for the recovery of persons apparently drowned. A constant chewing, or smoking of tobacco, hurts the appetite, by depriving the constitution of too much saliva; but though it is improper for lean, dry, hectic people, it may be useful to the more gross, and to such as are subject to cold diseases. Snuff is seldom productive of any bad effects, unless it be swallowed, but it should not be used by such as are inclined to an apoplexy. Tobacco is a great expeller of phlegm when smoked in a pipe, in which vast quantities are consumed, the greatest part by way of amusement, though some commend it as a helper of digestion; many extol it as a preservative from the plague; but Rivinus says, that in the plague of Leipsic several died who were great smokers of tobacco. The distilled oil is of a poisonous nature; a drop of it, taken inwardly, will destroy a cat (Culpeper 1981:184).

Tobacco's use in medicine continued well into the nineteenth century, but as late as 1830 *Gunn's Domestic Medicine*, written by Dr. John C. Gunn, observed that:

To describe the tobacco plant, would be entirely useless; it would answer as little purpose, as to describe the countenance of an *old friend*, with whome we had long before shaken hands, and become perfectly familiar.

He goes on to describe a vast range of benefits, including use of tobacco, "applied as a poultice to the breast and belly," as a remedy for worms; used in a similar way to relieve constipation and cure "dropsy of the belly"; it was used to cure a wide range of problems associated with the womb; and even for relief of colic.

Gunn terminated his discussion with the advice, "it can scarcely be necessary to advise my readers that, the tobacco plant is an active and powerful medicine, and dangerous when used to injudicious excess."

In the colonies the use of tobacco continued unabated. While smoking in kaolin, or white clay, pipes was very common, so too was chewing. In fact, one antebellum traveler noted that the ladies of Charleston had the very common problem of caring for skirts on public floors and streets almost covered with spittle from tobacco chewers! Another observer remarked on the hoards of men "spitting chewing tobacco in one direction and blowing their noses in the other," which ought

to lessen our appreciation for "the good ol' days."

# Colonists & Tobacco

Getting Started	Lesson Objectives	Instructional Approach
<b>Time Needed</b>  -Minimum of two 45-55 minute class periods (teacher may choose to expand time spent in class )	A. The student will be introduced to the reasons Carolina colonists raised tobacco.  B. The student will be introduced to the reasons tobacco gradually became less important than other crops in South Carolina.	<b>Exploration</b>  Whole Class (handling objects & discussion)
<b>Lesson Materials</b>  Provided in Travel Box: • Tobacco leaves, seeds, pipe, magnifying glass, mounted photographs and drawings.  • Tobacco Education curriculum, including lesson plans and activity sheets for teachers to use in classroom.	C. The students will understand how the heritage and history of South Carolina has been affected by the cultivation of tobacco.  D. The student will understand how tobacco competed with other profitable crops in South Carolina.	<b>Development</b>  Whole Class (discussion)
	E. The student will explore the different methods and difficulties in transporting tobacco to warehouses in Charleston.	<b>Application</b>  Whole Class (discussion &/or project)

## "Full Circle" Questions

(Questions which help relate the past to the lives of students today)

1. When was your community settled?
2. Did colonists grow tobacco in your community? How did they get the tobacco to Charleston?

# Colonists & Tobacco

## Lesson Procedures

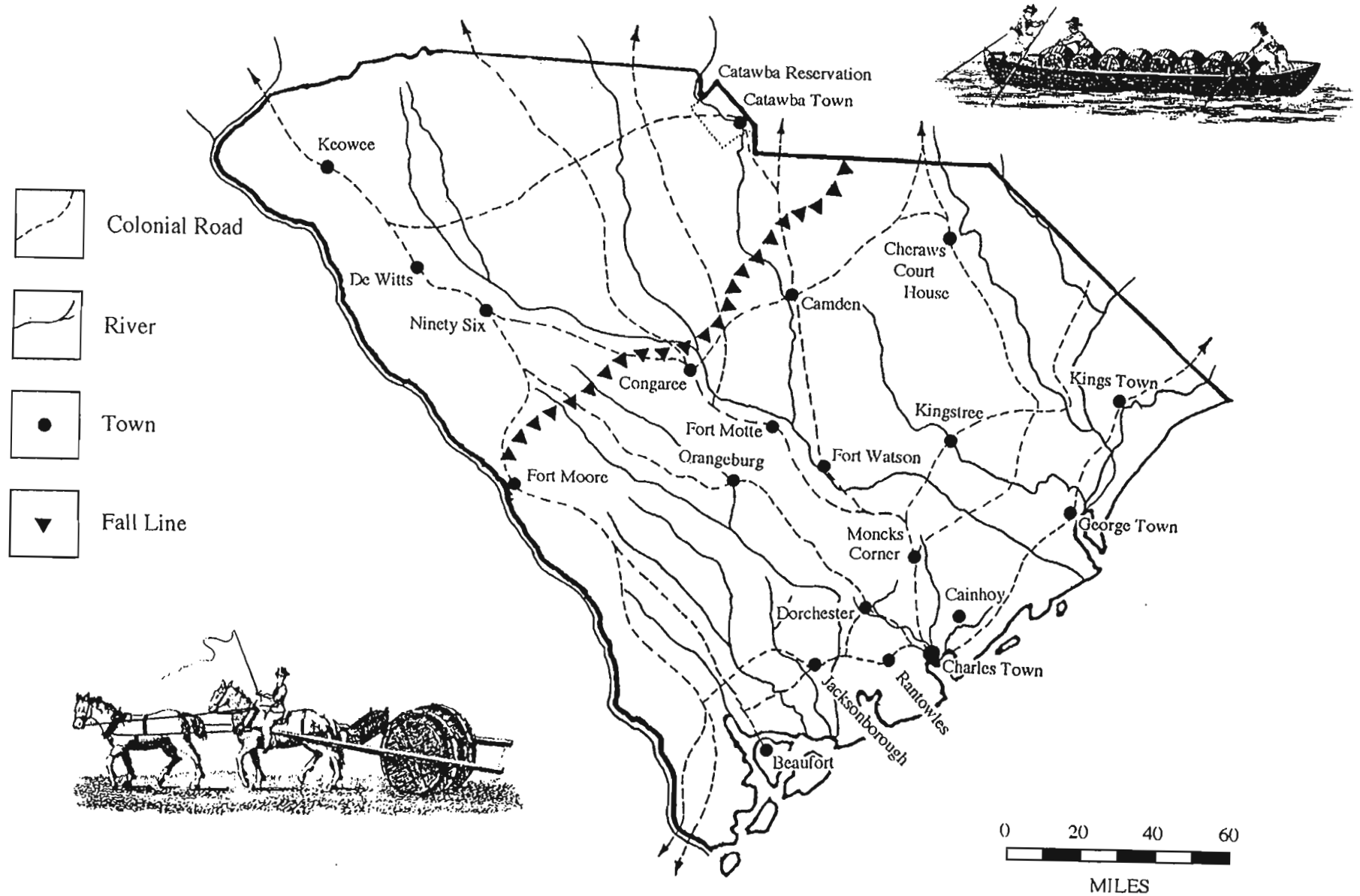
1. The teacher will explain to the students that the Carolina colonists were encouraged by the Lords Proprietors to raise tobacco, ginger, indigo, and cotton. Tobacco was smoked, chewed, and used as snuff by the Europeans and the colonists, grew well in the Carolinas, and could be easily exported for a profit.
  2. The teacher will explain that Carolina planters found greater profit in growing rice and cotton after 1800. However, tobacco was still grown for household or local consumption.
  3. The teacher will explain the methods of growing and drying tobacco.
  4. The teacher will allow students to handle and examine tobacco leaves, seeds, and replica of colonial tobacco pipe. The students may also examine drawings and photographs that illustrate the importance of tobacco and other crops in South Carolina.
- 
5. Encourage students to discuss why colonists would grow tobacco instead of other crops.
  6. Encourage students to discuss how other crops might have been easier or more profitable to grow after the American Revolution.
- 
6. The teacher will assign students to research the different methods and difficulties of transporting tobacco from fields to Charleston. (See Colonial Tobacco Worksheet).

### "Full Circle" Questions (continued)

3. Are there any streets or roads in your community named after tobacco?
4. What other crops were grown in your community?



# COLONIAL TRANSPORTATION



# COLONIAL TRANSPORTATION

Examine the map of major rivers and colonial roads. Answer the questions below.

1. Locate your community on this map. How far away is it from a colonial road?  
What is the closest town?

2. Identify the major rivers on this map. How have some of these rivers changed?

3. Find the best roads for transporting tobacco to Charleston from these towns.

How many miles would you travel?

At 24 miles per day, how long would it take to get from these towns to Charleston?

- a. Keowee
- b. Camden
- c. Kings Town
- d. Fort Moore
- e. Beaufort

4. Find the best route for transporting tobacco to Charleston from these towns,  
using a combination of roads and rivers.

How many miles would you travel?

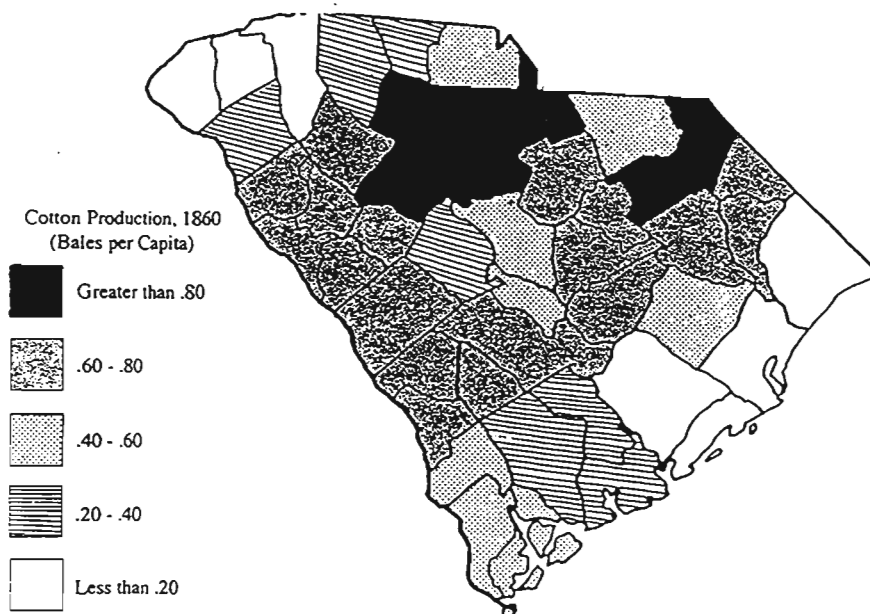
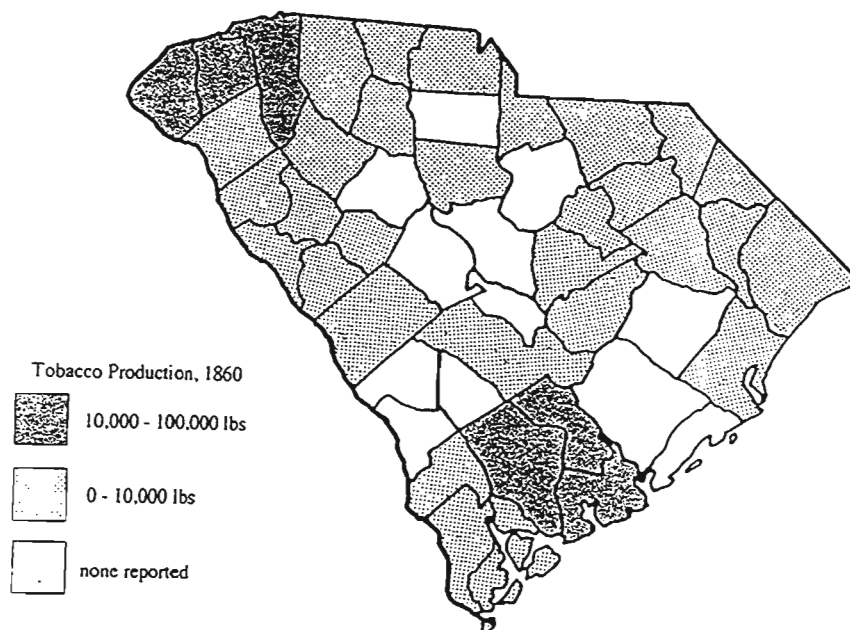
NOTE: at the fall line, rivers are too dangerous to navigate. All boats must be emptied, and tobacco taken by road across the fall line. Past the fall line, the rivers are safe again.

- a. Catawba Town
- b. Ninety Six
- c. Moncks Corner
- d. Orangeburg

# SOUTH CAROLINA TOBACCO & COTTON CROPS, 1860

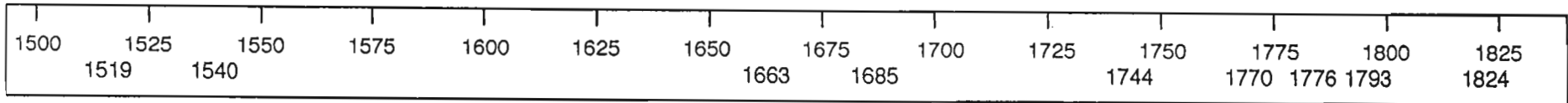
Study the maps. Then decide whether each statement is true or false.  
If the statement is true, write T next to it. If it is false, write F.  
Correct the facts in the false sentences.

1. Tobacco was grown in more counties than cotton.
2. Both cotton and tobacco were grown in Marlboro County.
3. Marion and Dillon Counties grew more than .80 bales of cotton per capita.
4. Every county in South Carolina reported growing tobacco.
5. Cotton grew best along the coast.
6. Greenville County grew more tobacco than Florence County.



# COLONISTS & TOBACCO TIME LINE

Study the time line. Then decide in which year each of the events took place.  
Write each year in the blank space.



23

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. The use of tobacco has spread throughout Europe.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Invention of the cotton gin.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Eliza Lucas Pinckney markets the first successful Indigo crop.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Charles II grants Carolina to the 8 Lords Proprietors.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Tobacco is first introduced to Spain.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Tobacco is accepted as payment for all debts to the Lords Proprietors.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Hernando de Soto reaches the Wateree River.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Governor Bull places tobacco on his list of the most important South Carolina crops.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Rice is first grown in South Carolina.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Declaration of Independence is signed.

## THE RISE OF BRIGHT LEAF TOBACCO AND THE PEE DEE TOBACCO REGION

A new "type" of tobacco originated before the Civil War in Caswell and Granville counties, North Carolina. Instead of air-drying the tobacco leaf on the stalk in well ventilated houses, this new process cured the tobacco leaves, minus the stalks, using carefully controlled heat in tightly closed tobacco barns. As a result, the leaf turned a bright golden color. This new tobacco leaf was called bright leaf. In order to prevent the leaves from being darkened by smoke and soot the farmers adopted a flue curing method. The flues distributed the heat uniformly and the leaves were left untainted by smoke or soot -- producing a much smoother, and milder, tobacco.

Although tobacco was an expensive commodity during the Civil War, the Confederate Congress pressured farmers to produce food for the war effort. Tobacco production fell even further. Other plants were pressed into service, replacing the hard to find tobacco. One such plant was "rabbit tobacco" or "blackroot" (*Pterocaulon pycnostachyum* Ell.), the leaves of which were chewed as a tobacco substitute. The dried leaves of woolly mullein (*Verbascum thapsus* L.) were frequently used to adulterate tobacco.

The Civil War also had a crippling effect on the South's already shaky transportation system. After the war, South Carolina's economy was not revived until the railroads brought new prosperity. By this time, however, other crops (often cotton) had replaced the little tobacco grown before the war.

Although tobacco had just about died out in South Carolina, the depressed economy made many reform-minded farmers begin looking for a new crop. Cotton prices continued to decline in the 1880s and by 1893 the crop was at an all-time low of 4¢ a pound.

One crop that farmers turned to was tobacco. Not only did bright leaf tobacco bring much higher prices than the ordinary dark leaf curing process, but several events had taken place in the last quarter of the nineteenth century which made bright leaf an attractive choice. A cigarette rolling machine was introduced in 1882, making manufactured cigarettes affordable and attractive to the public. These new machines could produce 200 cigarettes per minute -- dramatically increasing the demand for bright leaf tobacco. In addition, the federal government reduced the excise tax on cigarettes from \$1.75 per thousand to a mere 50¢ per thousand.

These two events, coupled with the decline in cotton prices, offered the incentive to South Carolina farmers to once again begin tobacco production. With cotton prices sinking and tobacco's increasing, one historian has noted that the demand for bright leaf tobacco stood out as "scattered island of green in a sea of white." With an average price of 8¢ a pound and an average yield of 400 pounds per acre, a Pee Dee farmer in 1885 might gross about \$32 from a typical acre of cotton. Net profits on tobacco, however, could run as high as \$116 an acre -- about what four acres of cotton would yield, before taking out expenses!

Initially "experts" from North Carolina were hired to introduce the technology of bright leaf tobacco. Farmers found that soil had a great deal to do with the distribution of bright leaf tobacco.

The new tobacco grew best in light-colored, sandy loams with yellow and red sandy clay

subsoil -- soils known as the Norfolk, Dunbar, Rustan, Marlboro, and Lynchburg series. The North Carolina experts indicated that the best tobacco grew in thin soils and that "starved leaf made the lightest and most aromatic weed." As a consequence, the Pee Dee region, including Clarendon, Darlington, Dillon, Florence, Horry, Marion, and Williamsburg counties, became the center of the bright leaf tobacco production. In 1895 *The State* newspaper exclaimed that tobacco was the "Pearl of the Pee Dee." And in fact, the Pee Dee region planted 95% of the state's tobacco crop acreage in 1900.

Although other areas of the state (such as Richland, Orangeburg, Aiken, and Edgefield counties) experimented with tobacco, the efforts were short-lived and generally unproductive. Outside the Pee Dee cotton remained "king," in spite of all efforts.

Acreage increased from about 1200 acres in 1891 to over 4400 acres just a year later, in 1892. Pee Dee tobacco production grew at an even more fantastic rate in the first decade of the twentieth century, with the acreage increasing from 25,000 to 98,000 acres.

Coupled with the increased planting of tobacco were efforts to bring tobacco markets to South Carolina. The first tobacco warehouse auction in South Carolina was organized by Frank Rodgers in 1890 at his Florence Tobacco Manufacturing and Warehouse Company. Even this first auction was a social event, with 300 persons attending. Other businessmen and investors followed his lead and a number of warehouses were established in the Pee Dee region (at the peak of bright leaf production there were 77 markets in 29 towns across South Carolina). These warehouses were seen by local inhabitants as solid evidence of prosperity and progress. Often the buildings were financed by joint stock companies composed of local citizens hoping to cash in on this new wealth. One such warehouse in Florence was described:

It is a handsome structure, having a floor space 60 by 100 feet, and this is lighted by twenty large ground glass skylights. In front is a two-story brick structure, 40 by 50 feet in size, containing the offices. It has large sliding doors on all sides and is equipped with the latest improved trucks, etc. (*The State*, August 30, 1895).

Farmers brought their tobacco to these warehouses from mid-July through September. The tobacco was weighed and stacked in long rows on the floor for the sale. The auctions were memorable social events, often compared to fairs. One such auction was described:

The sun outside was hot - very hot - but a cool breeze helped to make it pleasanter by far than it was inside the warehouse. There was not room for even a breeze in there for every portion of the floor not covered by tobacco was occupied by an interested spectator, a steady farmer, an eager buyer or one of the fair ladies who served lemonade to the overheated men. . . . The crowd surged back and forth, following the auctioneer and the buyers. . . . The sales proceeded rapidly until dinner time. . . . This was served by the ladies of the Presbyterian church in a cotton shed near by, and when the well-heaped plates were emptied each man was ready to take up the work again and the sales proceeded rapidly until now, when the sun is just going down (*The State*, August 12, 1896).

When the auction season was over these buildings continued to be a focal point in the community, being used for political rallies, tobacco exhibits, and social events.

Tobacco, and the resulting warehouses, were a bonanza for small Pee Dee towns, with both the population and economy booming almost overnight. For example, the population of Mullins

increased from 242 in 1890 to 828 only ten years later, an increase of nearly 350%. Between 1900 and 1910 the population of Lake City grew by over 286%, from 375 to 1074 and Marion increased by nearly 210% from 1831 to 3844. This is contrasted by a statewide population increase of less than 14%.

The use, and distribution, of tobacco was also gradually changing. During the antebellum tobacco products were largely produced in England and exported to the States, although Pierre Lorillard built a snuff mill in New York in 1760. After the Civil War the number of American tobacco manufactories (such as P. Lorillard & Co. in Jersey City) dramatically increased -- along with the brands available. By 1900 there were 12,600 brands of chewing tobacco, 7,000 brands of smoking tobacco, and 2,100 cigar and cigarette brands!

Tobacco was a commonly stocked item at virtually every general store in the South. In the eighteenth century tobacco leaves were usually fashioned into a twisted form yards long. This rope twist was sliced into shavings for pipes, ground for snuff, or cut into bite size pieces for chewing. This "pigtail" tobacco sold for about 3¢ a foot. By the late nineteenth century, however, plug tobacco became more common. It was created by using pressure devices to compress the tobacco into a cake. Plugs weighed a pound and measured about 3 inches by 16 inches. General store clerks would slice a plug into five or six "cuts," each of which sold for 10¢.

World War I brought economic uncertainty, although eventually the war effort encouraged increased agricultural production -- and soaring returns. The return on wheat increased 175%, sugar 170%, cotton 175%, and tobacco shot up 220%. As prices increased, growers began planting more in hopes of cashing in. Between 1909 and 1919 bright leaf production in South Carolina tripled. In Lee County, for example, the tobacco output increased by an amazing 660%. There was a 400% increase in Chesterfield, and an 360% increase in Williamsburg County.

### **Cultivation of Bright Leaf Tobacco**

Tobacco seed is so small that about 5,000,000 are required to make one pound. Consequently, the seed cannot be sowed in the field, but must be germinated in specially prepared seed beds and later transplanted into the field. The best seed beds were recently cleared lands containing abundant vegetable material and few weed seeds. Often brush would be burned on the chosen spot to kill weed seeds, sterilize the soil, and add nutrients. The soil would be spaded and then prepared by raking. Additional nitrogen rich fertilizer was added to the planting bed.

The seeds, sown in January or February at the rate of 1 or 2 tablespoons per 100 square yards, would be mixed with wood ashes or corn meal to aid in their distribution. Afterwards the seeds would be lightly pressed into the soil using rollers or even the feet. A cloth shade or tent would be used to warm the bed and prevent frost damage.

As the seeds were sprouting, the farmer would begin preparing the field, adding fertilizer and plowing. After the plants in the bed were of sufficient size (typically 9 to 10 weeks after sowing) and all danger of frost was past, they were set in the field, usually about 3 feet apart.

About a week after setting, the fields were tilled, often deeply to loosen the soil. Later tilling would be shallow and was often incorporated with hoeing. The plants would be topped to increase the size of the remaining leaves, to make the remaining leaves thicker, and to make the crop mature more uniformly. Soon after the topping, however, the plant would put out suckers from the axils of the leaves. Not only was it necessary to remove these suckers by hand, but the process had to be repeated several times.

During the growing season one of the worst insect enemies was the Southern tobacco worm (*Protoparce carolina*). Farmers would dust their crops with "Paris green." This was cupric acetoarsenite, a very potent arsenic insecticide. In addition, the farmer would remove the worms by hand, dropping the larva into jars of kerosene.

About three months after the plants were set, or about a month after topping, the tobacco plants would be ready for harvest. The ripening was shown by the leaves changing from a deep green to light green with yellowing, a crumpling of the leaf along its margin, the leaf veins becoming brittle, and the leaf becoming heavier and less smooth. Even with topping it was uncommon for all of the leaves to be ready for harvest at one time, so often leaves were harvested separately. Alternatively, the stalk could be cut with the leaves attached.

The harvested plants were allowed to wilt slightly in the field before being taken to the tobacco barn. Once strung in the barn, the curing process begins. The temperature of the barn was elevated to about 90° F and maintained for about 24 hours, or until the leaves became a bright yellow color. Then the temperature was raised to 120° F and maintained for 15 to 20 hours, a process known as "fixing the color." The temperature would be gradually increased to 125° F, at which point it would be maintained for about 48 hours. At the end of this the leaves would be entirely yellow, although the stalk would still be green. In order to cure the stalk the temperature would be raised to 175° F at the rate of 5° an hour, where it would remain until the stalks were totally dried.

In 1892 Charles Millspaugh published *Medicinal Plants*, which offered a very different view of tobacco from that of Culpeper in the early nineteenth century. Millspaugh remarked that:

As an habitual narcotic its modes of use are various. I place them here in the order of their harmfulness: Chewing without expectorating, inhalation of the smoke, chewing and expectorating, insufflation of snuff, and smoking without inhalation. The leaves are prepared for use, -- passing through processes which tend slightly to militate against the poisonous properties, -- in the form of twists soaked in molasses or liquorice, for chewing, called *plugs*; shredded leaves more or less pure, for chewing or smoking, called *fine-cut*; finely-broken leaves, sometimes bleached, for smoking, termed *granulated tobacco*; rolled into cylindrical forms, either pure or saturated with nitre, as *cigars* and *cheroots*; rolled into small cylinders and wrapped in paper, as *cigarettes*; pulverized and kept dry or damp for insufflation or chewing, as *snuff*; and many other minor forms (Millspaugh 1974:507).

### **Changes Brought by Bright Leaf Tobacco**

In addition to changing the economic fortunes of many small Pee Dee towns, bright leaf tobacco also reshaped the lives of the local farmers. It introduced not only new prosperity, but also new problems. And it introduced new technologies.

Originally flue-curing involved setting open fires under the suspended tobacco leaves in a log structure. This, of course, required constant attention to prevent the barn, and crop, being destroyed by fire. By the time bright leaf tobacco was introduced to South Carolina the process had been modified with the fires kindled in furnaces outside the barn. Flues were used to carry away the smoke and fumes. This new process was safer, required less fuel, and allowed the curing process to be more carefully regulated.



The barns used by bright leaf tobacco growers were typically square or rectangular measuring between 16 and 24 feet. Inside the structures, about 6 to 9 feet above the earth floor, were four equally spaced horizontal tier poles dividing the barn into five "rooms." Tier poles continued these "rooms" to the ceiling (upwards of 20 feet high) at vertical distances of several feet. Tobacco was strung on sticks that were hung across the tier poles, allowing the leaves to be well exposed to the heat of curing. A filled barn might contain up to 5 tons of tobacco.

The tobacco barns were typically wood frame or log, tightly constructed to seal in the hot air. The early flues were made of mud and stone, or by cutting trenches in the earthen floor and covering them with sheet iron. A woodburning furnace was located outside the building, with a brick chimney extending up the outside wall. Coal fired furnaces were introduced in the 1920s and in the 1940s oil fired furnaces placed inside the barns came into use. In the 1970s the "bulk" barns, large metal storage units resembling mobile homes, replaced the tobacco barns.

Most tobacco barns had shed extensions on at least one or two sides. These sheds protected the furnace and operator from the weather, and provided shade for the stringing process. They also served as storage areas when the barns were not in use.

Hundreds of tobacco barns used to dot the Pee Dee region. Today many have been torn down while others have simply fallen down. These barns, however, are a visible reminder of the importance of bright leaf tobacco to South Carolina's economy and heritage.

But perhaps the biggest change was that associated with the labor of tobacco. South Carolina's economy was in ruins after the Civil War. Large and middling planters had depended on a ready supply of African American slaves to plant and harvest crops prior to the war. Forced to pay wages for labor and hindered by an absence of cash, Southern landowners began to enter into agreements with blacks and whites as either sharecroppers or tenants. The owners received a portion of the crop -- often cotton or tobacco -- in lieu of cash rent. The sharecropper or tenant was also frequently obligated to work for the land owner.

Being a tenant was a hard life and was not attractive to many blacks, who wanted to own their own land and "be their own masters." Many blacks felt, often with good reason, that tenancy was just another form of slavery. While a clear majority (nearly 70%) of white farmers in six Southern states owned their land in the early twentieth century, only 6.5% of the African American farmers owned their own land.

Life was particularly hard in the Pee Dee region since tobacco cultivation used intensive hand labor and practically no machinery. In the first quarter of the twentieth century nearly 65% of South Carolina's tobacco farmers were tenants, while in neighboring Virginia and North Carolina only 26% and 44%, respectively, were tenants. The impoverished lives of tenants and sharecroppers stood in stark contrast to the great wealth of the tobacco warehousemen and manufacturers.

Life became even more harsh during the Great Depression. Dependent on merchant credit for planting loans, the Southern agricultural system collapsed when banks failed and cash became almost non-existent. The misery was increased by low prices, resulting from overproduction and unstable prices. Owners and tenants alike suffered.

Two excellent oral histories are presented in Terrill and Hirsch's *Such as Us: Southern Voices of the Thirties*. Both can be used to convey the harshness of tobacco farming during this period and their use for additional, outside, reading is strongly recommended. It is particularly

important for students to understand that tobacco farmers, like virtually everyone in the South suffered terribly during the depression. This was particularly true for the tenants, who had little even in the good time and during the bad were virtually destitute. A government study conducted in the mid-1930s found that the average value of a white tenant's house was about \$450, a black tenant's house was about \$240, while the average owner's house was valued at over \$1000. The average net income of farm owners during this period was about \$2600, compared to only \$321 for a sharecropper! And the average net income per family of wage laborers was \$180.

What stability there was in the tobacco region was a direct result of federal tobacco programs instituted during the depression to control supply. The Agricultural Adjustment Act (AAA) of 1933 was passed, primarily to control supply. Originally the act allowed voluntary participation, although by June 1934 the Kerr-Smith Act was passed to penalize farmers who failed to reduce crop acreages. Farmers voluntarily limited tobacco acreage; the tobacco sales of those not participating were heavily taxed to encourage compliance. Within a year almost all acreage was under voluntary contracts which established the base acreage the farmer was allowed to plant. Payments were made to farmers based on the percent of their land left unplanted. Another AAA was passed in 1938 setting national quotas for tobacco. The allotment system stabilized tobacco production for nearly 30 years, until the early 1960s. This system, however, discouraged mechanization since cultivation was concentrated on small family farms which were unable to make the financial investment in equipment.

In 1961 a lease and transfer system was established, allowing allotments to change at the county and farm level. This change was a major contributor to the break down of traditional land and labor practices associated with tobacco production. Large scale tobacco production was possible and large farms began to form. A further change occurred in 1968 when the federal government extended loose leaf marketing to auction houses, eliminating the grading and tying of tobacco leaves into "hands" for the auction.

# Bright Leaf Tobacco

Getting Started	Lesson Objectives	Instructional Approach
<b>Time Needed</b>  -Minimum of two 45-55 minute class periods (teacher may choose to expand time spent in class )	A. The student will be introduced to the growing and drying methods that result in Bright Leaf tobacco.	<b>Exploration</b> Whole Class (handling objects & discussion)
<b>Lesson Materials</b>  Provided in Travel Box: • Tobacco leaves, seeds, magnifying glass, and mounted photographs and drawings.  • Tobacco Education curriculum, including lesson plans and activity sheets for teachers to use in classroom.	B. The student will be introduced to the reasons that tobacco became the "Pearl of the Pee Dee".	
	C. The students will understand how the heritage and history of South Carolina has been affected by the cultivation of tobacco.  D. The student will understand how tobacco barns help illustrate South Carolina history.	<b>Development</b> Whole Class (discussion)
	E. The student will explore the role his community/family played in the development of tobacco as a major crop in South Carolina.	<b>Application</b> Whole Class (discussion &/or project)

## "Full Circle" Questions

(Questions which help relate the past to the lives of students today)

1. Did anyone in your family work on a tobacco farm?
2. If you had a tobacco barn, what would you do with it?

# Bright Leaf Tobacco

## Lesson Procedures

1. The teacher will explain how the new process of drying tobacco leaves off the stalk, in flue heated tobacco barns, resulted in a golden colored tobacco leaf, known as Bright Leaf tobacco. The teacher will also explain how the growing methods were different from pre-Civil War methods.
2. The teacher will explain that several factors contributed to the rise of tobacco in the Pee Dee region: depressed cotton prices, the invention of the cigarette rolling machine, the reduction of the excise tax on cigarettes, and the discovery that Bright Leaf tobacco grew best in the soil of the Pee Dee region.
3. The teacher will allow students to handle and examine tobacco leaves, and seeds. The students may also examine mounted historic photographs that illustrate the cultivation of tobacco in South Carolina.
4. Encourage students to discuss the different people who may have worked on the tobacco farms, and their different responsibilities. Discuss how the growth of tobacco farms in a community brought prosperity to many Pee Dee communities. Discuss how this prosperity may still be seen in the large warehouse buildings built for tobacco storage and auctions.
5. Encourage students to discuss tobacco barns they may have seen, or that may be on their family's property. How are they different from other farm buildings? Are there a lot in your community? What does this tell you about the farms of the past? What does this tell visitors to your community?
6. The teacher will assign students to research the effect of tobacco on their community/family by interviewing older members of the community/family. (See Oral History Project Sheet).

## "Full Circle" Questions (continued)

3. How different might your community be without the cultivation of tobacco?
4. What other crops are grown in your area?

# ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

## OBJECTIVE:

To gain a better understanding of how the tobacco industry affected the daily lives of people in your community.

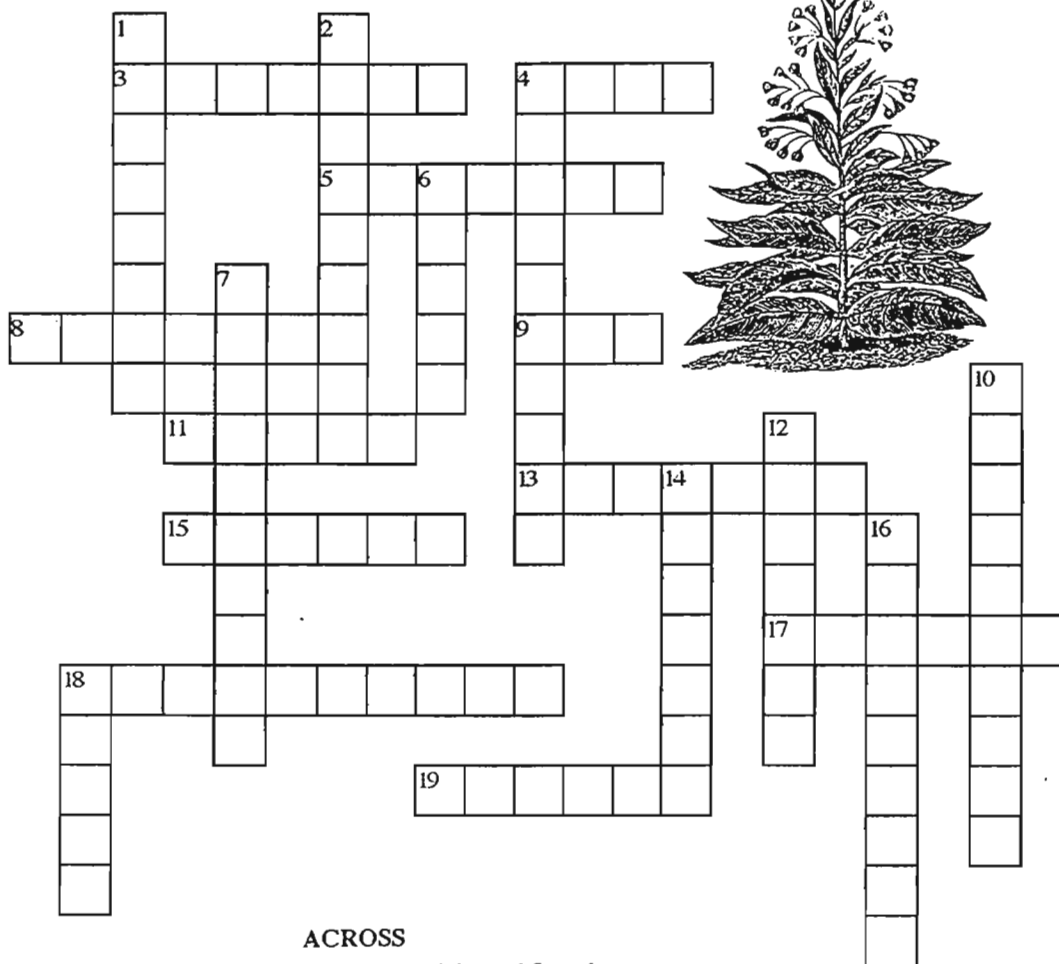
## Getting Started:

- Choose an older person in your family or community to interview. If you are new in the community, you may meet an interesting person at the library, church, or retirement home. Try not to be shy. Introduce yourself, and make a new friend who will have many interesting stories to tell!
- Be sure the person you have chosen understands that this is a school project, and that you will be writing a report about their life.
- Use a tape recorder or notepad to record the interview. You may need to go back several times to ask all your questions. If you have a camera, ask permission to take pictures.
- Be sure you spell any names correctly. No one likes to see his name misspelled.
- Listed below are a series of questions you may want to ask. Use your imagination to create more questions. Do not read the questions, ask them naturally.
- Listen carefully to the other person. Their answers may give you ideas for new questions.
- If you are able to borrow photos, letters, or scrapbooks, *be very careful!* These items are very precious to the other person.
- Write a report about the person's life. You should be able to answer these questions in your report:
  1. How is this person's life similar to or different from yours?
  2. Was the farming or selling of tobacco important to this person's family or community?
  3. Does the farming or selling of tobacco continue to be important to your family or community?
- Your class may choose to put all your interviews together in a book. Discuss with your teacher how this can be done.

**SAMPLE QUESTIONS:**

1. Where did your family live?
2. How many people were in your family?
3. Did the family move when you were a child?
4. Can you describe your house?
5. When did your family get indoor plumbing for the first time? Electricity? Telephone?
6. What kind of stove did you have?
7. Were there any outbuildings? What were they used for?
8. Were the children in school?
9. What was your favorite part of school?
10. What was your least favorite part of school?
11. How far away was school? How did you get there?
12. What toys did you have?
13. What church did you go to? How often did you go?
14. What did people in your family wear?
15. Did your family make their own clothes?
16. How did the women wear their hair?
17. Did they wear jewelry?
18. Did the men have beards or moustaches?
19. How did your family celebrate birthdays? Holidays? Weddings?
20. Did you get sick? What happened?
21. Did your family use mail order catalogues? What did you get?
22. What household chores were assigned to various members of the family?
23. What were the rules of your household?
24. What happened if you broke the rules?
25. How did you wash clothes?
26. How did you stay cool in the summer?
27. How did the people in your family earn a living?
28. Were they paid in cash or crops? Were they able to get credit?
29. Do you think your family was rich or poor? Why?
30. Did the women of the family work outside the home?
31. If you lived on a farm, what crops and animals did you raise?  
Which ones were raised for sale?
33. Did your family hunt?
34. If you lived in town, were there paved streets? Street lights? Sidewalks? Parks?
35. Did the town or community practice segregation? How did this affect you?
36. What part did movies, radio, or sports play in your life?
37. Did your family raise or sell tobacco?
38. Did you ever help in the tobacco fields? Did your friends?
39. Did you ever go to a tobacco auction?
40. Do you have any photos from the past?

# TOBACCO WORD PUZZLE



"HAND" OF TOBACCO.

## ACROSS

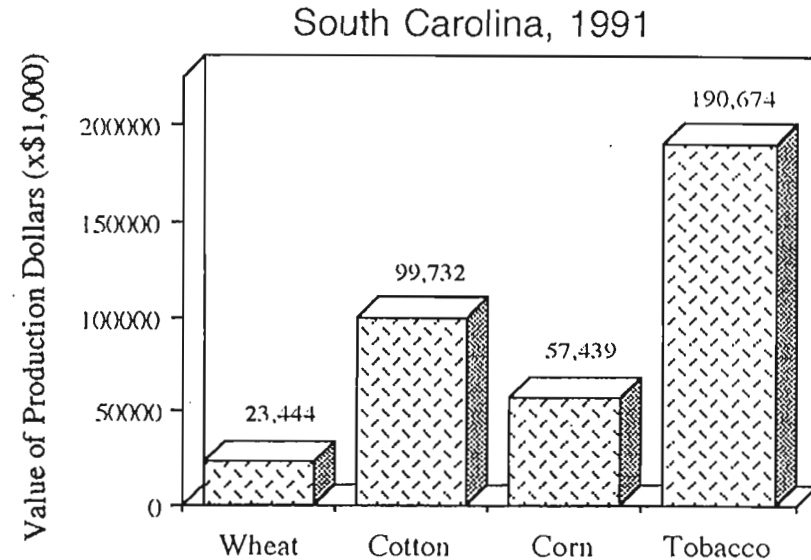
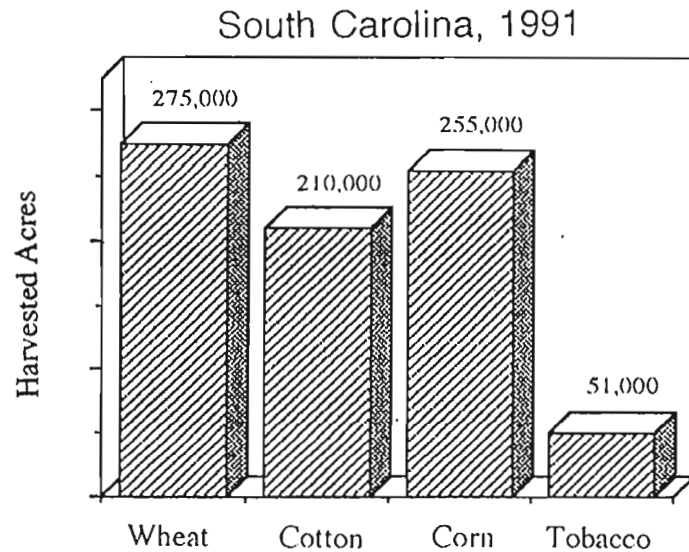
- 3 Colonial word for tobacco
- 4 1770 Governor who said tobacco was important crop
- 5 Cutting off top of tobacco plant
- 8 Inspection of tobacco
- 9 Government reduced this to encourage tobacco growers
- 11 Buildings where tobacco was dried
- 13 Event where tobacco was purchased from farmers
- 15 This SC area produced the best tobacco
- 17 By 1600 all of this continent used tobacco
- 18 Large buildings used to store and sell tobacco
- 19 More efficient than roads for transporting tobacco

## DOWN

- 1 Large barrels used for packing tobacco
- 2 This machine allowed cotton to become an important crop
- 4 Tobacco that is flue cured
- 6 1895: Tobacco was called the "\_\_\_\_\_ of the Pee Dee"
- 7 A machine that made these increased the demand for tobacco
- 10 To move new plants from seed beds to fields
- 12 He organized the first SC tobacco warehouse auction in 1890
- 14 Poor farmers who work on someone else's land
- 16 Lords Proprietors encouraged growth of tobacco in the \_\_\_\_\_
- 18 The worst insect pests of tobacco

## AGRICULTURE GRAPHS

Study the information below. Then fill in the blanks to complete each sentence.



1. The crop with the smallest amount of acreage is \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Fewer acres of corn were harvested than \_\_\_\_\_.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ acres of tobacco were harvested.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ more acres of corn were harvested than cotton.
5. More acres of \_\_\_\_\_ were harvested than anything else.
6. 159,000 more acres of cotton were harvested than \_\_\_\_\_.

7. The value of tobacco crops in 1991 was \_\_\_\_\_.
8. The value of corn was more than \_\_\_\_\_.
9. The value of tobacco was \_\_\_\_\_ more than cotton.
10. \_\_\_\_\_ crops provided \$3,738.71 per acre.
11. \_\_\_\_\_ crops provided \$8.52 per acre.
12. The crop with the most value per acre in 1991 was \_\_\_\_\_.

List two more facts found in this graph:

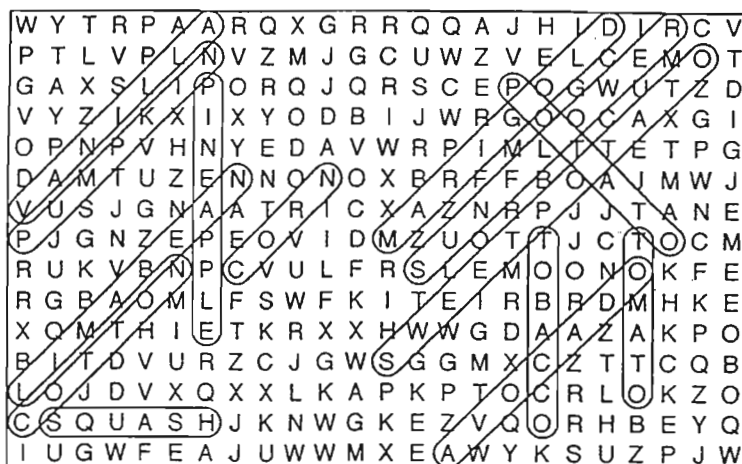


# ANSWER SHEET

## Activity 2

1. True
2. False
3. False
4. False
5. True
6. True

### Activity 3



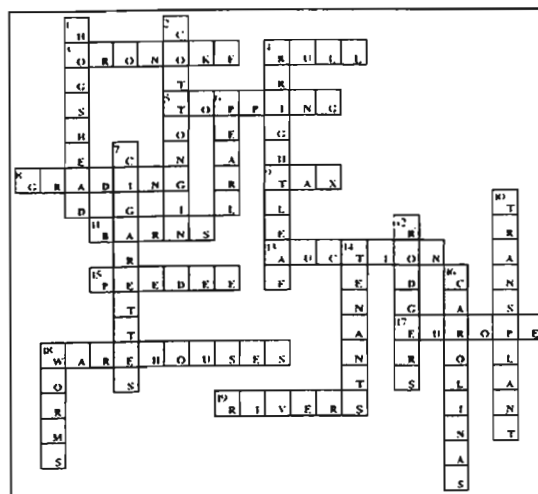
## Activity 5

1. False
2. True
3. False
4. False
5. False
6. True

## Activity 6

1. 1600
2. 1793
3. 1744
4. 1663
5. 1519
6. 1675
7. 1540
8. 1770
9. 1685
10. 1776

## Activity 8



## Activity 9

- |            |                  |
|------------|------------------|
| 1. Tobacco | 7. \$190,674,000 |
| 2. Wheat   | 8. Wheat         |
| 3. 51,000  | 9. \$90,942      |
| 4. 45,000  | 10. Tobacco      |
| 5. Wheat   | 11. Wheat        |
| 6. Tobacco | 12. Tobacco      |

## SITES TO VISIT

### Tobacco Barns

Tobacco barns are common throughout the Pee Dee region, although they are a vanishing resource. Built of wood and not really intended to last very long, many of the barns built during the 1920s and 1930s have already fallen victim to rot, insects, and demolition. Many of the tobacco barns you see in the countryside today were built in the 1950s and were never heated with wood or coal, but exclusively used oil. And even these are often covered with kudzu and are vanishing from our heritage.

Probably the best way to find a tobacco barn to visit is to ask around in your community and school. It may even be that one of your students has a tobacco farmer relative who would be willing to have groups visit the farm and learn more about tobacco. If you can't locate a tobacco barn, call the Pee Dee Heritage Center and we will try to locate one near your school.

### Tobacco Warehouses

The *Old Brick Warehouse* is located on the corner of Main and Wine streets in downtown Mullins, South Carolina. This warehouse was constructed between 1903 and 1908 and is the oldest extant tobacco warehouse in South Carolina. It is also believed to be the first brick tobacco warehouse in Mullins. It is a one and a half story, brick building. The front and rear facades have stepped parapets and windows in the original (left) portion are arched. Windows on the front illuminate offices which are one room deep and two stories high. The remainder of the interior is open. The original portion of the building has a slightly gabled roof. In the 1960s an addition (the right portion of the building) was added with a flat roof.

Also located in Mullins, on Park Street, is the *Liberty Warehouse*, built about 1923 for W. H. Daniel, Jr. The Daniels are a prominent Mullins tobacco family. This building is also one and a half stories, made of brick with stepped parapets on the front and rear elevations. There are six arched loading bays on the left and right elevations.

The *Neal and Dixon Warehouse* is located at South Main Street in Mullins, South Carolina. It was built about 1926 for J.S. Neal, C.O. Dixon, and J.H. Dixon, Sr. It is virtually unaltered and is perhaps the best example of a traditional tobacco warehouse remaining in South Carolina. At the time of its construction, the Neal and Dixon Warehouse was reported to be the largest and most modern facility in the state. During the 1926 season, the warehouse is said to have employed over 800 people. The building is one and a half stories with a metal-covered gable roof. The roof has numerous skylights and the front and rear elevations have stepped parapets. There are eight arched loading bays on the side elevation and arched drive-throughs are located on the front and rear.

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## Additional on-line sources

Historic photos of tobacco cultivation – go to <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/fsaquery.html> and in the search function type, “tobacco South Carolina”.

Source of tobacco seed for planting in the classroom – go to <http://www.newhopeseed.com/tobacco/>; there are a variety of seeds and most are under \$5. This source also sells tobacco plants.

### [Tobacco as an insecticide!](#)

If you live in a tobacco region (like the Pee Dee), you can probably get a few leaves from a local farmer. Otherwise, the only place we have found that sells tobacco leaves is <http://tobaccotalk.itgo.com/>.

North Carolina has a great website on tobacco barns at <http://www.hpo.dcr.state.nc.us/ctb/ctb.htm>

For examples of South Carolina tobacco properties listed on the National Register:

[Drew Barn, Marion Co.](#)

[Dillard Barn, Marion Co.](#)

[Neal and Dixon's Warehouse, Marion Co.](#)

[Old Brick Warehouse, Marion Co.](#)

# A "BREAK" FOR LIBERTY.

## FLORENCE FARMERS MAKE A NEW DEPARTURE.

**The Permanent Establishment of Tobacco Raising as a South Carolina Industry—A Successful Revolt Against King Cotton—The Key to Independence has been Found—The Imposing Celebration of the Opening of the First Tobacco Market.**

FLORENCE, October 1.—Special: A good many years ago—so tradition runs—the farmers of South Carolina grew tobacco, and the grandfathers of many of the present generation in Charleston will tell now of the time when their grandfathers remembered how the planter used to send their tobacco to Charleston in wagons, or rolled it down in hogheads, and had it stored in the building known for the last half a century as the South Carolina Military Academy. Many now living can remember when Felix Dutrieux and the venerable Father O'Neill used to gather in the gunshed of the Lafayette Artillery on "Tobacco" street on the night of the 3d of July, and wait for the "guardman" to put out the lights on the approach of dawn to fire the salute with which our grandfathers used to usher in the glorious Fourth.

This was a good many years ago, however, and the story is old. How King Cotton came upon the scene and covered the land with its fleecy and seductive staple is also an old story. Tobacco as a staple was relegated to the rear, or rather to the Northward and Westward, and the cotton factor came into fashion.

### THE WATCHMAN ON THE TOWER.

But all this is another story. It was not so very many years ago that The News and Courier, with its watchful eyes upon the new South, which it aided so much in making a prosperous possibility, saw with prophetic vision the disasters that threatened the agricultural people of the Palmetto State if the policy of "all cotton" should be followed to its legitimate conclusion throughout the South. It was when sea island cotton had fallen from \$2 to 20 cents a pound, and upland cotton had dropped from 15 to 8 cents, when the cost of cultivation increased almost in the ratio of the decrease in the price of the staple, that The News and Courier sent out a warning note to the farmers of South Carolina. Commencing in 1878 this paper began an earnest advocacy of the plan of a diversity of crops. At infinite pains and with untiring patience it pointed out to the farmers of the State the folly of staking their all upon the price of cotton; the wisdom of diversifying their crops, and thus acquiring an independence which under no circumstances could be theirs so long as all their energies were devoted to the cultivation of a staple which was daily growing in the volume of its production and daily deteriorating in value.

### THE TOBACCO IDEA.

It was pointed out to the agriculturists of the State that the lands in many sections were especially adapted to the growing of tobacco, that the finest quality of this article could be grown here with profit, and that the cultivation, even in comparatively small areas, of tobacco as an adjunct to the cotton crop would render the farmer absolutely independent of the changes (all with a downward tendency) in the values of cotton.

The News and Courier, as even its detractors know, never wearies in any fight it undertakes for the good of this State. The tobacco idea was patiently, earnestly, persistently preached for over ten years, as will be seen by a reference to its files. Its editor and manager brought all the powers of argument, supported by indisputable facts, to urge this idea upon the people, and was aided most heartily by a corps of able correspondents in various sections of the State. It was a fight for the farmers of South Carolina, and it was waged with all the earnestness and ability at the command of the paper. So convinced was The News and Courier of the correctness and soundness of its idea that it determined to

### PUT IT TO THE TEST.

and in the most practical manner. This brings us down to the year 1885. In The News and Courier of October 26 of that year the following announcement was made:

"We are now prepared to distribute tobacco seed, suitable for sowing in lower South Carolina. After a full examination of the subject, we have selected what is known as the Cuban seed leaf as that which is best adapted to the soil and climate of the low-country. It is a hybrid and grows large, of a fine texture and delightful flavor. The seed is obtained from Major R. L. Ragland, of Virginia, who takes much interest in the promotion of tobacco culture in South Carolina. One ounce of the seed will sow one hundred square yards, which should furnish plants for from two to four acres. We have prepared a pamphlet containing full instructions for the cultivation and curing of tobacco. It gives directions for preparing the plant beds, and for preparing and manuring the land to be planted in tobacco; it shows how the plants shall be pruned and topped, the best ways of worming and suckering, and how the tobacco shall be cured and housed. Some special hints are given as to the cultivation of cigar tobacco.

"The material for The News and Courier pamphlet is taken, by permission, from a pamphlet by Major Ragland, and from letters received from him. No amount of reading will altogether take the place of practical experience, but we feel warranted in saying that intelligent farmers, with the information contained in our pamphlet, can learn how to raise and cure tobacco, and how to make it ready for market.

*The News and Courier*  
Charleston, SC  
2 October 1891

**Archaeological  
Investigations**

**Historical Research**

**Preservation**

**Education**

**Interpretation**

**Heritage Marketing**

**Museum Support  
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